

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ISO-00 COME-00 L-03 EB-11 OMB-01

TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 MC-02 DODE-00

DRC-01 /086 W

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R 140800Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4895

INFO AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0796

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GB

SUBJ: PRE-LICENSE CHECK FOR EXPORT LICENSE REQUEST

REF: STATE 180723

LIBREVILLE 780

LONDON 9862

1. EMBASSY HAS MADE INVENTORY OF ALLEGATIONS AND KNOWN FACTS REGARDING ACTIVITIES OF AFFRETAIR AND EMPLOYMENT OF ITS DC-8. IN OUR JUDGEMENT INSUFFICIENT HARD EVIDENCE EXISTS TO JUSTIFY DENIAL OF EXPORT LICENSE FOR SPARES TO FIRM AT THIS TIME. WE RECOMMEND TRANS-ACTION DESCRIBED STATE REFTEL BE APPROVED.

2. EMBASSY HAS REVIEWED FULL TEXT OF TIMES ARTICLE (LONDON REFTEL). IT DOES CONSTITUTE IMPRESSIVELY COHERENT CHAIN OF ALLEGATIONS. ON OTHER HAND WE HAVE GABONESE ASSURANCES - IN WRITING PRIOR TO DC-8 SALE AND VERBALLY FROM MINISTER OF TRANSPORT ESSONGHE (LIBREVILLE REFTEL) - TO AFFECT DC-8 NOT ENGAGED IN RHODESIAN TRADE.

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3. IN BALANCING FACTORS IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH AND

IN CONCLUDING THAT TRANSACTION SHOULD BE APPROVED  
WE HAVE JUDGED THAT SALE OF SPARE PARTS SHOULD NOT RPT  
NOT BE DENIED SOLELY ON BASIS OF A PRESS REPORT  
UNSUPPORTED BY OTHER EVIDENCE. IT APPEARS TO US TO  
DO SO WOULD MEAN THAT MANY OF OUR INTERNATIONAL  
COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS COULD BE JEOPARDIZED OR  
UNNECESSARILY DELAYED MERELY BY PRESS SPECULATION.

4. FOREGOING ANALYSIS IS FRANKLY LEGALISTIC BUT WE  
BELIEVE ULTIMATELY FAIR. AND HAVING MADE IT EMBASSY  
IS FIRST TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ACTIVITIES OF AFFRETAIR  
ARE -PUTTING IT MILDLY - SHADOWY. THE ATMOSPHERE OF  
SLOVENLY DISUSE WHICH SURROUNDS LIBREVILLE OFFICE OF  
AFFRETAIR IS ENOUGH TO AROUSE ONE'S SUSPICIONS.

5. ACCORDINGLY WE WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH MFA AND  
MINISTER OF TRANSPORT ESSONGHE TO PROVIDE WRITTEN  
ASSURANCES ON USE OF DC-8. WE HAVE ATTEMPTED  
UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR PAST 2 DAYS TO CONTACT ESSONGHE.  
BECAUSE HE IS NOT THAT SENIOR A MINISTER AND BECAUSE  
FOREIGN MINISTER RAWIRI AND PRESIDENT BONGO ARE OUT  
OF COUNTRY, HE AND COLLEAGUES AT MFA MAY BE AVOIDING  
OR DELAYING REPLY TO OUR NOTE VERBALE. IN MY NEXT  
MEETING WITH ESSONGHE I INTEND IN LEAST THREATENING  
MANNER POSSIBLE TO RAISE PROBLEM OF EXPORTING SPARES  
IN THE FUTURE IN THE ABSENCE OF FIRM WRITTEN OFFICIAL  
ASSURANCES ABOUT USE OF DC-8.

6. WE NOTE THAT REFTTEL DOES NOT SPECIFY THAT SPARES  
ARE FOR DC-8. WE ASSUME THAT THEY ARE AND THIS IS  
REASON FOR COMMERCE'S HESITATION. WERE REQUEST FOR  
DC-6 SPARE PARTS, ASSUME PROBLEM WOULD NOT BE AS  
CRITICAL BECAUSE NO ALLEGATIONS  
HAVE BEEN LINKING DC-6 AIRCRAFT WITH RHODESIAN TRADE.  
COUNTRYMAN

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NNN

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